

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified application are respectfully requested. Claims 14-34 are now pending, wherein claims 14-23 and 27-32 are amended, and claims 33 and 34 are new.

Claims 19, 20 and 29-32 are objected to for minor informalities. These claims are amended in the manner suggested in the Office Action. Accordingly, withdrawal of these objections is respectfully requested.

Claims 14, 18-22 and 24-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for obviousness in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,6,80,694 to Knockeart et al. (“Knockeart”). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants' claims are directed to systems and methods of providing messages between vehicles by way of a control center. The control center manages road tolls and the vehicle sending the message includes a device that determines road tolls. When a direction of travel indicator is actuated by a vehicle, the communication device used for communicating toll information automatically transmits a message to the control center. Based on the message received from one or more vehicles, the control center can then provide particular information to other vehicles. Thus, the present invention leverages a road tolls system in vehicles and an associated control center to provide additional information to other vehicles.

Turning now to claim 14, Knockeart does not render this claim obvious because Knockeart does not disclose or suggest the following claim elements:

1. an apparatus in a first vehicle comprising a communication device outputting said messages and said communication device including a unit that determines road tolls;
2. an apparatus in a first vehicle comprising an activation device including a direction-of-travel indicator operating element, said activation device automatically transmitting said messages from the communication device in response to actuation of the direction-of-travel indicator operating element, said messages comprising at least information about the position and speed of the first vehicle; and
3. a control center that controls and sends said messages from the communication device to the at least one second vehicle, wherein said control center manages road tolls.

Regarding the first and third elements identified above, the Office Action relies upon the disclosure in column 29, lines 11-15 of Knockeart. This section of Knockeart discusses that the *server* system can plan routes while accounting for toll fees along the route. There is nothing in the cited section, or any other section, of Knockeart disclosing or suggesting that a *vehicle* includes a unit that determines road tolls. Thus, Knockeart does not disclose or suggest the first element set forth above.

Moreover, there is no disclosure of suggestion that the server system of Knockeart, which is disclosed as performing route planning functions, manages road tolls. Instead, Knockeart merely discloses that the server system accounts for road tolls during route planning. Thus, Knockeart does not disclose or suggest the third element set forth above.

Regarding the second element set forth above, the Office Action cites column 1, lines 47-51 of Knockeart, which discloses the use of a compass to estimate direction of travel and a velocity sensor to estimate distance traveled. There is nothing in this or any other section of Knockeart disclosing or suggesting an activation device that automatically transmits messages from the communication device in response to actuation of the direction-of-travel indicator operating element. Thus, Knockeart does not disclose or suggest the second element set forth above.

Because Knockeart does not disclose at least three elements of Applicants' claim 14, Knockeart does not render this claim obvious. Claims 18-22 are patentably distinguishable over Knockeart at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 14.

Claim 24 recites similar elements to those discussed above with regard to claim 14, and is patentably distinguishable over Knockeart for similar reasons. For example, Knockeart does not disclose or suggest "automatically sending the message from a unit in the first vehicle for determining road tolls to a control

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center which is configured to manage road tolls after the driver of the first vehicle has activated a direction-of-travel indicator operating element.” Claims 25 and 26 are patentably distinguishable at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 24.

For at least those reasons set forth above, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 14, 18-22 and 24-26 for obviousness in view of Knockeart be withdrawn.

Claims 15-17 and 27-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for obviousness in view of the combination of Knockeart and U.S. Patent No. 6,034,598 to Barry et al. (“Barry”). Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for obviousness in view of the combination of Knockeart and U.S. Patent No. 6,823,258 to Ukai et al. (“Ukai”). These grounds of rejection are respectfully traversed.

Claims 15-17, 23 and 27-32 variously depend from independent claim 14. As discussed above, Knockeart does not disclose or suggest all of the elements of claim 14. It is respectfully submitted that Barry and Ukai each do not remedy the above-identified deficiencies of Knockeart. Accordingly, claims 15-17, 23 and 27-32 are patentably distinguishable over the current grounds of rejection at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 14, and withdrawal of the rejection of these claims is respectfully requested.

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If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #095309.57215US).

Respectfully submitted,

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